

Students' Sexual Behaviors Contributing to Unintended Pregnancy and STDs

- Fifty-one percent of the Tennessee students surveyed in 2001 had engaged in sexual intercourse during their lifetimes. The prevalence in males was 54% compared to 49% in females. In the U.S., the prevalence was lower at 46%. The lifetime prevalence for Tennessee students had stabilized in 2001, after it dropped notably from 1993 (62%), and 1995 (61%), to 1997 (53%). Ninth graders (36%) had the lowest proportion of students who had engaged in sexual intercourse. This proportion increased for students in the 10th (50%) and 11th and 12th (at 62% each) grades. Black students (70%) had higher lifetime prevalence of sexual intercourse than white students (45%).
- In Tennessee, 9% of students had sexual intercourse before age 13, compared to 6.6% nationwide in 2001. The proportion of males (12.2%) initiating sexual intercourse before age 13 was higher than the proportion of females (5.9%) doing so. Black students (17.7%) were more likely to report having sexual intercourse before age 13 than were white students (5.8%).
- Sixteen percent of students in Tennessee, and 14% of students nationwide, reported that they had been with four or more sexual partners since they began having sexual intercourse. More males (20%) than females (12.4%) reported having been with four or more sexual partners. Students in 12th (20.1%) and 11th (20.4%) grades were more likely to have had more sexual partners than 10th (15.5%) and 9th (10.8%) graders. A higher proportion of black students (29%) than white students (12%) reported four or more sexual partners.
- Among student respondents in Tennessee, 36% reported having sexual intercourse with one or more partners in the past 3 months, compared to 33.4% nationwide. No difference in prevalence was observed by gender. Black students (51%) reported this behavior more often than white students (32%). Ninth graders (25%) were least likely to report this behavior, with increasing percentages of 10th (34%), 11th (44%), and 12th (46%) graders reporting sexual intercourse in the past 3 months.
- Among the group of students in Tennessee who had engaged in sexual intercourse within the past 3 months, 22% had drunk alcohol or used drugs before their most recent sexual intercourse, compared to 26% nationwide. Male students (27%) reported using alcohol or other drugs before intercourse more often than female students (17%). White students (25%) were more likely to use alcohol or other drugs before sexual intercourse than black students (15%).
- In 2001, 88% of Tennessee high school students had been taught about AIDS or HIV infection in school. Percentages are consistent by gender and across race. However, fewer 9th graders (81%) had learned about AIDS or HIV infection in school compared with other grades (87% of 10th graders, 93% of 11th graders, and 92% of 12th graders).